



Testimony on the 2017-18 New York State Health/Medicaid Budget
Presented by Dr. Bryan Ludwig
On behalf of the
New York Chiropractic Council
Before the 2017 Joint Legislative Committee on the 2017-18 NYS Health/Medicaid Budget
February 16, 2017
Legislative Office Building
Albany, New York

I am Dr. Bryan Ludwig, a New York licensed chiropractor. I have also served as the Albany District President for the New York Chiropractic Council and it has been my privilege to testify on behalf of the New York Chiropractic Council before this committee for the last several years.

The New York Chiropractic Council's mission is to direct people to the realization that healing comes from within and that ultimately the promotion of *health and wellness* is superior to the treatment of disease. The purpose of the New York Chiropractic Council is to promote the basic philosophy, science and art of chiropractic; to protect the welfare of the *practicing Doctor of Chiropractic* without compromise, and with parity and respect; to protect the public's ability to receive chiropractic care without prejudice or financial penalty; and to keep the practice of chiropractic separate and distinct from all other healing professions.

Thank you for once again via legislative proclamation declaring September 2016 as Chiropractic Health Month in New York. Such recognition is important to the profession as it recognizes that chiropractic care is an integral part of the overall healthcare system in New York. Thank you.

A quick word about some important pending legislation that will impact health care outcomes in New York, but technically falls within the jurisdiction of the Joint Budget Committee on Higher Education: The Medical Partnership Bill. This important legislation permits Medical Doctors and Doctors of Chiropractic to form business partnerships. By doing so, there will be significant economies of scale, thereby saving the health care system money, and patient outcomes will improve due to enhanced coordination of patient care. Many states, such as New Jersey and Connecticut, already allow for these partnerships, and we ask that you once again consider this important legislation as part of the state budget negotiations.

As chiropractors we deal with structural reasons for why the brain and nervous system may not perform optimally. This is important because the nervous system directs healing in the body. Disruption of the nervous system's functions through a structural shift of the spine interferes with the nervous system's ability to direct healing. Chiropractors improve or correct the ability of the nervous system/brain to function by restoring normal structure in the body. It's that simple.



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Now let's talk about the positive role of Chiropractic in New York's health care system. For the past several years, I have had the privilege of testifying on behalf of the New York Chiropractic Council and listening to the testimony of many caring and effective health care organizations and professions in New York. Across the board, they were scared that they would not have the necessary funding to properly care for their patients. I could not help but think how their own bottom lines, and our own state budget, **would benefit if there were simply fewer sick New Yorkers!** The common themes I heard repeatedly were if only we had more funding we could hire more help, have more beds, create more infomercials on the benefits of quitting smoking, and provide more drugs for our sick patients.

But here is the simple point: traditional healthcare strategies do not necessarily create healthier people.

An analogy: Once people get on the "down escalator" of treating secondary health issues, it often leads to a decline in overall health, loss of ability to heal, increasingly expensive interventions and reliance on increasingly more costly drugs and surgery. One tragedy are those who got on the escalator for pain relief and go from prescribed pain medications to opioids, and then recreational drugs. Over the years I have listened to Senators and Assembly members express their concerns about an increasing number of New Yorkers becoming addicted to narcotics, particularly heroin. Tragic – and avoidable.

From the chiropractic perspective, what is often promoted and accepted as "health", truly is not. The "quick fix" mentality of treating symptoms alone without finding the underlying cause of disease leads to chronic illness and wasteful spending on health care in New York. But Chiropractic can help New Yorkers achieve true health, safely and naturally, and in the process save our health care system significant amounts of money.

One particularly relevant study: in 1999 a large Chicago HMO began a 7 year test regarding the effectiveness of "drug A" versus "treatment B". What they found was that over a 7-year period, in-hospital admissions decreased 60.2%, there were 59.0% less hospital days, 62.0% less outpatient surgeries and procedures, and 85% less pharmaceutical costs when treatment B was utilized instead of drug A. What was treatment B? Chiropractic care!
(JMPT 2004 (Jun) ; 27 (5): 336–347) (J Manipulative Physio Ther 2007 (May); 30 (4): 263–269)



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So as you negotiate the 2017-18 Health and Medicaid budget, please remember this: chiropractic care saves money. Lots of money, over more “conventional” medical treatments for same or similar conditions.

If you want to spend less on prescription drugs and needless surgery, if your goal is to have fewer heroin addicts in New York, then you must reach people BEFORE they become an addict, sick or diseased – you must put and keep them on the road to good health. Chiropractic does this.

We must try to heal the body naturally. Does the patient have the proper building blocks (nutrition)? Does he or she exercise? Is their mind and emotional state healthy? Are the brain and body communicating effectively via the central nervous system? These are the essential, holistic questions that chiropractic asks.

Chiropractic focuses on how the body works as a whole, without drugs or surgery. Chiropractic does not pollute or modify the body chemically, merely to mask symptoms and disease, but actually helps the body return to its proper function. Chiropractic achieves excellent outcomes for people with health problems, but more important, chiropractic shines at keeping people healthy, so disease or symptom manifestation never occurs! Chiropractic helps keep people healthy before chronic disease or addiction robs the body of its natural ability to heal itself. It’s as simple as that.

And chiropractic can help people of all ages: from a pregnant woman, to a newborn baby, to someone dependent on caregivers at home or a nursing home. Why? Because chiropractic care is also safe. See *Adverse Events Associated With Pediatric Spinal Manipulation: A Systematic Review* <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/119/1/e275> (Study reviewed 14,000 instances looking for adverse events associated with chiropractic care and found only 9 adverse outcomes.)

A case in point: Medicaid. Chiropractic care could substantially help many Medicaid eligible New Yorkers, but it is not presently a covered Medicaid benefit in New York. So Medicaid patients seeking Chiropractic care must pay 100% out-of-pocket for preventative chiropractic care. Why?



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Please remove these barriers to Chiropractic care and establish reasonable rates of compensation for chiropractic, whether it be Medicaid or Workers' Compensation. Presently, both systems act as a *disincentive* to providing quality chiropractic care.

We would like to participate in the Medicaid system in New York, we would like to be able to reduce the costs to the state for unhealthy people who are no longer able to heal themselves, but we as a profession still can't in many respects. Why?

We need a better way, and Chiropractic can be part of that solution. By keeping New Yorkers healthy in the first place, Chiropractic can help New York's health care system save money. That's the bottom line. And various independent, peer-reviewed third-party studies have proved this.

On behalf of the New York Chiropractic Council, thank you again for the opportunity to offer this testimony today. I wish you the best of luck and the full support of the New York Chiropractic Council as you begin your important work on this year's state budget.

Thank you.